

ROUTE TRANSFER STUDY
SCOPE, SCHEDULE, TAC COMMENTS
March 17, 2004

STUDY PROCESS

During the initial round of Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meetings, we heard a number of suggestions regarding the continuation of agency involvement through the Route Transfer Study. Based upon the willingness of 30 individuals to take time from their schedules and attend a TAC meeting, it is obvious that there is considerable interest in this study and therefore it is important to maintain close communications throughout the study.

Based upon a review of the input received, the following course of action is recommended:

- A web site has been established for the Route Transfer Study [www.routetransfer.org]. All documents related to the study will be posted on this site.
- The TAC will consist of:
 - All 37 persons who responded to the ADOT letter indicating an interest in participating on the TAC.
 - The 15 persons who attended one of the February TAC meetings who had not originally responded to the letter
 - All District Engineers
 - All Council of Government (COG) and Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) directors
 - Members of the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) Transportation Review Committee
 - Members of the Pima Association of Governments (PAG) _____
- Members of the TAC will be kept informed of the study progress through e-mail. All working papers and reports will be either e-mailed directly to this group or they will be notified of postings on the web site.
- ADOT-only meetings to discuss issues internal to the Department will be held as needed.
- If necessary, TAC meetings to deal with specific issues will be called and all members will be notified and invited to these meetings.
- A final TAC meeting will be held to finalize recommendations.

PRODUCTS/SCHEDULE

Products of the Route Transfer Study will consist of six working papers on different topics related to Route Transfer and a final report. The schedule, a summary of the scope of work for each topic, and comments received at the initial series of TAC meetings in February 2004 that are relevant to each topic are presented below.

Set-Aside Funding (May 2004)

Responding to immediate opportunities for route transfers has proven difficult because negotiated improvements, as a condition of transfer, must be included in the ADOT Five Year Transportation Facilities Construction Program before the transfer can go forward. Therefore, it has been recommended that setting aside funding that would accomplish one or two top priority transfers per year be considered. This policy would allow for some high priority transfers to go forward more quickly.

The purpose of this Task is, thus, to identify options for a Route Transfer Set-Aside funding element in the ADOT Five Year Program.

TAC Comments

- State of Minnesota sets aside \$30 million per year for route transfers
- COGs should get additional Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds in return for accepting transferred routes

Transfer Local Roads to State System (June 2004)

Adopting a process for consideration of routes that local agencies believe should be transferred to the State System has been suggested. While Arizona law allows the Transportation Board to consider bringing additional routes onto the System, it is unclear to local agencies how the process works. In recent years some routes have been brought onto the State System as a part of negotiated trades involving transfer of State highways to local authorities. However, there is not currently a defined process by which requests can be submitted to ADOT and the Transportation Board and considered for inclusion

The objective of this task is, thus, to define a process by which local roads may be considered for transfer onto the State System. Based on planning practices and issues regarding highway, road, and street development, there may be two processes, one for the major metropolitan planning areas of MAG and PAG and another for the remainder of the state

TAC Comments

- Identify warrants for the transfer of county and city routes to the State

Design and Maintenance Standards for Urban Highways (July 2004)

This topic deals with special design and maintenance standards when a through State highway serves local businesses (e.g. a small town main street) and the possibility of requiring local jurisdictions to finance improvements to provide business access and/or community amenities.

A significant problem to be addressed is the conflict between desired local development and State highway standards. Some states, notably Oregon and Maryland, have identified alternative standards so that State highways passing through urban areas can better meet the needs of local development as well as those of the State System. This also helps avoid the need to transfer segments of routes that result in discontinuity of the remaining State highway.

The purpose of this task is to better define alternative design standards and how they would be used in order to allow ADOT and local agencies to determine if such standards should be developed for the State System.

TAC Comments

- Consider more than pavement standards; consider also roadway conditions such as drainage
- Consider future roadway cross-section needs; what future improvements are going to be needed; how far into the future should be considered in transfer agreements
- Policy on minimal maintenance may impact condition of roadway when transferred
- Signage on routes on which State and locals split maintenance duties
- Consider maintenance efficiency in the route transfer assessment

Internal ADOT Procedures and Cost Benefit Analysis (August 2004)

This topic deals with developing internal procedures to ensure that:

- a. Senior ADOT Management and the Transportation Board are informed of potential route transfers early in negotiations;
- b. The benefits and costs to ADOT of making transfers are considered early in the negotiation process.

The purpose of this procedure would be to improve internal communication regarding issues that may arise in the negotiation of route transfers. It responds to the criticism that the cost of some transfers has seemed excessive. It seeks to put all the facts on the table while allowing for the fact that it may sometimes be in the best interest of all parties to transfer routes even when costs of the transfer exceed direct future cost savings.

The objective of this task is to work with ADOT senior staff, District Engineers, Planning Division staff and the Route Transfer TAC to define an efficient process to assure that timely, relevant information reaches senior management and the Transportation Board at the appropriate point in the process of transferring routes.

TAC Comments

- Process to adopt new routes into State system
- Transfers to Indian and Federal agencies
- Better communications needed between appropriate persons at both State and local level
- Need to consider financial concerns of local agencies
- Must consider costs beyond maintenance in transfer assessment; eg local agencies may not have trained staff (eg signal technicians) or proper equipment (eg snow plows)
- Consider shared resources for construction and maintenance
- Functional classification restrictions created funding problems for County that could not be adequately maintained
- Allowable functional classification mileage in a jurisdiction should be adjusted with any route transfer

Frontage/Spur Road Inventory (September 2004)

The 2003 Route Transfer and Level of Development Study identified a number of frontage roads and short stub roads, most of which were left as a result of construction and realignment of a State highway. These roads no longer function as State highways and do not appear on State highway inventories. Nevertheless, ADOT is responsible for their maintenance and operation. In addition to these roads other segments of right-of-way were identified for which the road itself

had been obliterated but are still owned as State routes. In most cases these roads were left in their present configuration as a result of realignments of the main highway. These roads are not contained within ADOT State highway inventories, the Highway Performance Monitoring System (HPMS) database, or the Functional Classification System.

The purpose of this topic is to provide an inventory of frontage roads, spur roads and other short road segments that are owned by ADOT but do not function as highways and are not contained in existing databases.

A brief review of roads identified five types of roads to be inventoried:

1. Roads in public use and maintained by ADOT, but not functioning as highways and not listed in State highway inventories;
2. Road segments used primarily for ADOT maintenance purposes and not generally used by the public;
3. Road segments not used or maintained by ADOT but remain owned by ADOT and open to the public.
4. Segments of old roads which have been obliterated but not formally abandoned;
5. Pieces of property that were never part of a State highway but are owned by ADOT and at one time or another have been used as travel ways.

TAC Comments

- None

LOD/SOC (September 2004)

System Operational Classification (SOC) was proposed to replace Level of Development (LOD) as a tool to describe the intended operational characteristics of State highways and to provide guidance for planning, project selection, management and design.

The LOD classification system was developed in the 1970's and updated several times. The most recent update was started in order to determine which roads should remain as State highways and which, because they did not serve a State function, should be transferred to local jurisdictions. While the LOD tool proved useful for making the fundamental distinction between routes serving State functions and other routes, the update raised several issues, including questioning LOD as the proper target for development of State routes when the real intent of such a classification system should be to determine the desirable operational characteristics. Planning, management and design determinations should flow from these desired operating characteristics.

The SOC classification will create the link between statewide planning objectives, system development objectives and actual project selection. For this reason it will be important to coordinate the SOC Study with the statewide planning process as well as with ADOT operations and with key external stakeholders.

TAC Comments

- Differentiate between urban and rural routes

- Study route transfer to determine what roadways should be on the State System, not to reduce ADOT costs

Route Transfer Report (November 2004)

The Route Transfer Report will update the draft Route Transfer and Level of Development Study printed in October 2003.

TAC Comments

- Will review and modify existing policies as part of this study
- Should National Highway System and Scenic Roads be transferred
- Can routes that have been constructed with federal funds be transferred